

**Amendments to the Claims:**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

1. - 8. (canceled)

9. (currently amended) A broadband communication system of the type utilizing xDSL packet-based technologies, the system comprising:

an upstream xDSL modem; ~~and~~

a twisted pair connected to the upstream xDSL modem;

a plurality of taps defined along the twisted pair;

a plurality of downstream xDSL modems at a plurality of user sites, each downstream xDSL modem being in communication with a corresponding tap of the plurality of taps, the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems providing packet-based point-to-multipoint communication between the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems at the plurality of user sites; and

wherein the taps are located along the twisted pair between the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of user sites, wherein the plurality of downstream xDSL modems are operative to transmit to the upstream xDSL modem in a contention-based protocol, and wherein the upstream xDSL modem is operative to transmit to the plurality of downstream xDSL modems in a broadcast-based protocol.

10.-18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) A broadband communication method for xDSL packet-based applications, the method comprising:

broadcasting from a point, over a twisted pair, with an upstream xDSL modem;

receiving at a plurality of points with a plurality of downstream xDSL modems at a plurality of user sites, each downstream xDSL modem being in communication with a corresponding tap of a plurality of taps defined along the twisted pair between the upstream

xDSL modem and the plurality of user sites, the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems providing packet-based point-to-multipoint communication between the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems at the plurality of user sites; and

transmitting from the plurality of downstream xDSL modems to the upstream xDSL modem in a contention-based protocol; and

transmitting from the upstream xDSL modem to the plurality of downstream xDSL modems in a broadcast-based protocol.

20.-21. (canceled)